

Idaho Trade Token Newsletter

Boise, Idaho

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News

This may not be news to many of you, but in case you don't know, Boise Urban Stages, the city bus system in Boise, uses tokens as one method of paying fares. The tokens used are a mixture of the various 16mm types used since the 1920s, including the Boise Streetcar Co., Boise Bus Co., and 1981 BUS tokens. They are available at Albertsons and other outlets in envelopes of 10 for \$7.00, and are a better deal than the 75¢ cash fare. It is unusual nowadays to get a Streetcar Co. or nickel Bus Co. token, but they do show up. I have been amused to see current Boise Bus tokens offered at flea markets for prices ranging from 25¢ to \$5.00 each. Is this the only current use of transportation tokens in Idaho? The Idaho Falls C.A.R.T. plastic tokens may still be in use, but I know of no others.

Advertising pocket whetstones

At the local flea market recently I picked up another advertising whetstone to add to my collection. At the get-together last July I noted that a number of people had collections of these nifty advertising items, and most of them were different. They are not very closely related to tokens, although they are a bit similar to "Good For" trade mirrors in their configuration. All whetstones I have seen date from the early 1950s. There are eight different ones in my collection now; each round and 55mm in diameter. I was surprised to notice that each of them has a telephone number on it.

Let's compile a quick list of all we have. Please send me a photocopy or complete description in standard token nomenclature with colors of both background and printing. Be sure to note the use capital and lower case letters. I'll include the list in a future letter.

Anderson Ranch Dam

Most of southern Idaho is too arid to produce crops without irrigation. Over the years various schemes were tried to deliver water to farmland by diverting the flow of rivers. Almost without exception, the supply of water would run out before the crops matured, due mainly to the fact that the natural flow of the rivers went to a minimum during July, August, and September. The United States Reclamation Service's Arrowrock Dam, completed in 1915 on the Boise River, was the first major project to store Idaho's winter runoff and release it to the irrigation projects in a controlled manner. The capacity of the reservoir behind Arrowrock was 286,600 acre-feet, but that was not enough to meet the demand for water. To capture additional runoff for controlled release, the Bureau of Reclamation (successor to the U.S.R.S.) undertook a study and concluded that a dam could be built on the South Fork of the Boise River northeast of Mountain Home at a site occupied by the J. M. Anderson family ranch. This project would catch the runoff from the Trinity Mountains

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and upper South Fork drainage behind what would be the largest earth-filled dam in the world, then release the water through the turbines of the power plant to generate electricity, a secondary benefit of the project.



**Construction Camp
below the Dam**



The dam and reservoir beyond

With America on the brink of entering World War II, Congress appropriated funds for this project. Engineering proceeded, specifications for the project were drawn up, and various heavy construction firms were invited to bid. Bids were opened at the Bureau of Reclamation office at 214 Broadway Avenue in

Boise on July 7, 1941. The low bid of \$9,986,203. was made by a group of four major companies, Morrison-Knudsen Company, Inc. of Boise, J. F. Shea Company, Inc., Ford J. Twaits Company, and the Winston Brothers Company, the latter three being from Los Angeles. This group was known by the first initials of the four companies: M. S. T. W. Four other construction companies also participated as did a number of subcontractors.

At the time, the Morrison-Knudsen Company had their headquarters right across Broadway from the Reclamation office; since then they built the modern M-K Plaza Building on the east side of Broadway. The company suffered through years of financial and management trouble, very nearly failing. Now, after restructuring the business and shedding some parts, M-K is back on the road to corporate health.

Work on the Anderson Ranch project started on August 7, 1941. In addition to the dam itself, M. S. T. W. needed to build a construction camp which became a regular town. In November of 1941 there were 750 workers employed with early prospects of 450 more. The town industry was heavy construction, so material handling facilities, equipment maintenance shops, and construction offices were built. Since this dam was being built at a fairly remote site, housing and services for employees and their families were built in the canyon. The housing included 254 residences, 8 bunkhouses. The support facilities included a post office, school, 350-man dining hall, Camp Managers Store, theater, bowling alley, drug store, and soda fountain making it pretty well self-contained. What was not included was the tavern and dance hall which were located in the "town" of Dixie, south of the construction camp but close to the "Dixie Pit", the source of the fill material for the dam. M-K was familiar with the logistics needed to complete a project of this magnitude. They even had a stockyard still visible on Fairview Avenue near Eagle Road between Boise and Meridian where they fattened and slaughtered beef for the construction dining hall.



Security on large construction projects has always been an issue, but with the world embroiled in a war, M. S. T. W. required its workers to wear an identification badge. It is this badge which added further confirmation to the attribution of the tokens used in the camp commissary. In 1941 wages for laborers on the project ranged from a low of 65¢ per hour up to \$1.75 per



hour for the operator of the Monighan drag-line based on a straight 48-hour week. The tokens were most likely used in connection with the bowling alley (which probably boasted a pool table or two). They may have been used at the commissary, however higher denominations should be known if they were used to give advances until payday. I know of 4 of the 21mm brass 5¢ denomination, but only one of the 24mm brass 25¢ token.

When the country moved fully into the war effort, the War Production Board halted much of the work on Anderson Ranch Dam on December 26, 1942. M. S. T. W. was authorized to proceed with some efforts needed to "mothball" the project until the end of the war. Most of the construction workers and much of the equipment was pressed into duty on war-related projects. When the intent of the halted project was made clear to the War Production Board through the War Food Program (i.e. to provide a reliable supply of irrigation water to farms within the Boise Irrigation Project, so farmers could raise crops), the completion of the project, minus the power plant, was authorized on October 6, 1943. At the end of the war, all War Production Board restrictions were lifted and the contract was renegotiated with the Morrison-Knudsen Company. Unfortunately Congress did not appropriate enough money to finish the project and it continued piecemeal until final completion in 1952.

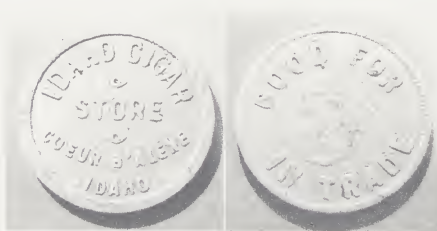


Louise Shadduck's newest book

Idaho Hall of Fame member Louise Shadduck has touched the lives of many Idahoans during her career. She wrote for the **Coeur d'Alene Press**, worked with the Idaho State Department of Commerce and Development, and authored several books, just to hit a few highlights. Her latest book is **At the Edge of the Ice: Where Lake Coeur d'Alene and its People Meet**, published by Tamarack Books of Boise (ISBN 1-886609-08-X). I have not yet finished reading it, but could not wait to recommend it to you. It is full of historical photos and anecdotes about the people and places surrounding Lake Coeur d'Alene. For instance:

Percy Walden, Sr. and his brother-in-law, Bill Walton, leased and ran what had been the barroom in the east wing of the Idaho Hotel, which had been closed since November 1911, when Kootenai County went "dry." Their capital was \$500 and was entirely Bill's money. Credit was obtained. The Idaho Cigar Store was in business. Tobacco in all forms was displayed at the front. There was a shoe-shine stand at the east wall. Past the swinging door was a bar that sold soft drinks, and many card and pool tables. Percy and Bill put hours of work into the venture and by 1917 accounts had been paid, progress made, and the future seemed bright.

Other gems included are glimpses into the family history of Dick Magnuson, and stories relating to numerous people who used trade tokens in the conduct of their businesses. I was well into the book before realizing that Frank Fremont Shadduck, proprietor of the grocery store which issued the SHADDUCK'S GROCERY tokens from Coeur d'Alene was Louise Shadduck's grandfather. This book would make a great addition to your library!



There are three known varieties of the Idaho Cigar Store token.

CODA-2 IDAHO / CIGAR STORE / COEUR / D'ALENE / IDA. // GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE 21mm rd br (4 known to me)

CODA-2(A) (Shown) IDAHO CIGAR / STORE / COEUR d'ALENE / IDAHO // GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE 25mm rd al (3 known to me)

CODA-2(D) IDAHO CIGAR / STORE / COEUR D'ALENE / IDAHO. // GOOD FOR / 25 / CENTS / IN TRADE 27mm oc br (2 known to me)

The **1916 Idaho Gazetteer** shows William W. Walton and Percy B. Walden as selling cigars in the Idaho Hotel. The 1923 Coeur d'Alene directory lists the Idaho Cigar Store - cigars, tobacco, billiards, soft drinks, cards, taxi in connection - at 111 Sherman Avenue. The 1931 Coeur d'Alene directory shows the Idaho Cigar Store located at 117 North Second Street. James W. Willard was listed as owner in the 1936 - 1940 timeframe. Willard was later owner of the Park Drive Grocery until at least 1956.

Hoo's Hoo

Mason (Scoop) Yould was a writer for the Boise Capital News when the city had enough market for multiple newspapers (i.e. before television). His rhymes featured Boise businessmen and were compiled into a small book called Hoo's Hoo, Familiar Figures of Boise Caught in Metrical Snapshots. Here is one of Yould's works:

*Who sells papers and magazines
From Portland down to New Orleans?
And candies, chewing gum and smokes,
And drinks for thirsty janes and blokes?
Who'll back a Boise basket squad
Until he's dropped his hard-earned wad?
Whose store, yclept the Up-To-Date,
Enjoys your visit soon or late?
And you can bank on what he says -
A dead square guy in George Cordes.*

The July, 1915 Boise District telephone directory lists the Up-To-Date Fruit Store at 1008½ Main Street. It's listing says "Club Subscriptions for Magazines" which probably explains the first part of the Yould's rhyme. Quite often a news dealer or even a newspaper would supplement their income by acting as subscription agents for the popular magazines and papers of the day.

By 1916, the Up-To-Date was located at 1010 Main Street, downstairs and one door west of the previous location. My information about further activities of Cordes and the Up-To-Date is sketchy, but he is listed in directories into the mid 1930s as being in the cigar and confectionery business. The 1930 Polk's Boise directory shows the Up-To-Date as being operated by Silas Cordes. I assume Silas was a relative of George and was managing this business while George was proprietor of the Idanha Cafe and Cafeteria.



There are four token varieties from this business:

BO-48 THE UP TO DATE / BOISE / IDAHO // GOOD FOR / 5¢ /
IN TRADE 21mm rd(ch) br (4 known to me)

BO-48(A) UP TO DATE / BOISE, / IDAHO. // GOOD FOR 1 CIGAR
(Shown) 21mm rd(ch) ni (8 known to me)

BO-48(B) THE UP TO DATE / BOISE / IDAHO // GOOD FOR 1
CIGAR 21mm rd(ch) ni (3 known to me)

BO-48(D) THE UP TO DATE / 1010 / MAIN / ST. / BOISE,
IDAHO // GOOD FOR / 25¢ / IN TRADE 26mm rd al
(1 known to me)

A maverick, UP-TO-DATE / POOL / HALL // GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN
TRADE 21mm rd br, has been attributed to this business, but I
believe it is a very questionable attribution. The Boise Up-To-Date did
have pool tables, but I have never found a listing for it as a pool hall.
Also the 21mm tokens are all holed and it seems like Cordes had a
"non-maverick" mindset when he ordered tokens; he was specific
down to the address on the 25¢ one.

1998 Idaho Token Collectors Gathering

Dean Rasmussen and Mike Fritz have been putting some thought into our soon-to-be Second Annual gathering. Mark your calendars now so there will be no excuses why you can't make it to Salmon, Idaho on July 18 and 19. Details will follow as these guys work them out. I know one thing – the best omlette I have ever had was at the hotel coffee shop in downtown Salmon. Actually, I know two. Salmon High School has a class called "Patchwork" in which students research, write, and illustrate articles on local history. Their efforts are published in an annual called Patchwork, Pieces of Local History. I have several issues, the latest being the 6th edition in 1991. Hopefully this excellent work is continuing.

Best regards,

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